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# 10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections: Considering Feminist Aware/Feminist Unaware Interactions as Intercultural

Kelly Doran

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10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections:

Considering Feminist Aware/Feminist Unaware Interactions as Intercultural

Kelly Doran

University of Portland

### **Introduction**

Are you a feminist? This is a simple question, and yet it creates a complex social dynamic in today's society. Divisions between those who identify with feminism and those who do not have only grown, and thus when two individuals from different sides of this split interact there tend to be unproductive outcomes. These can include avoidance, confrontation, insult, exclusion, and more. Even someone wishing to learn about feminism may feel kept on the outside by this barrier, fearing rejection for not knowing enough or because of a stereotype of what a typical feminist should be. These stereotypes have problems of their own, creating animosity between feminist individuals and those who do not agree with feminism and making it easy for these groups to criticize and dehumanize each other. It is almost impossible even to address feminism without discussing the 'angry feminist' stereotype, not to mention that of 'male chauvinist pig.' From all of these issues, it is clear that problems exist in interpersonal interactions surrounding feminism. But how can these problems be understood and improved upon?

It is first important to define clear labels to describe where individuals fall on the spectrum of feminism. For the purposes of this paper, the general opposition between individuals on the topic of feminism will be described as feminist aware and feminist unaware. Feminist aware includes anyone who self-identifies as feminist, as well as those who choose not to use the label but still uphold feminist values and generally support the movement. Feminist unaware includes anyone who actively opposes feminism, as well as those who feel they do not understand it, choose to ignore it, or wish to know more but do not feel as though they are able to access the feminist community.

A second and more crucial endeavor is to understand why interactions between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals can be so divisive. For this pursuit, intercultural communication literature presents an unexpected yet valuable lens. Of course, there is not necessarily an intercultural difference between a feminist aware individual and a feminist unaware individual, given the common understanding of culture as strictly heritage-based. However, an arguably comparable difference occurs, and viewing it as such is illuminating. Here, the cultural difference is comprised of views on gender and gender equality, as well as experiences growing up and living in a gendered body. The cultural differences between men and women, men who identify as feminist and men who don't, women who identify as feminist and men who identify as feminist, non-binary individuals who identify as feminist and women who identify as feminist, etc. are significant othering factors that must be overcome in interpersonal interactions. The initial feeling and fear of difference stemming from this fundamentally intercultural setting can cause interactions surrounding feminism to become unpleasant, aggressive, or dismissive. Thus, insights for navigating cultural difference may be applied to these different experiences of gender and the gendered world to produce real insights about the problems of interactions surrounding feminism as well as offering potential solutions.

### **Framing the Problem**

The problem that must be addressed is this: a barrier often exists between feminist-aware and feminist-unaware individuals. In order to address the problem, it is crucial to understand how this barrier has been created and continues to thrive. Considering interactions between feminist-aware and feminist-unaware as intercultural makes it possible to borrow from existing intercultural literature, namely Identity Management Theory (Gudykunst, 2005), to describe the sources feeding the barrier. In order to fully understand why this is a problem, it is also necessary

to consider the needs of the feminist movement and the challenges of allyship which make crossing this barrier difficult but vital.

#### **Four IMT Face Problems that Perpetuate Barriers**

Identity Management Theory (IMT) is an especially useful lens for understanding the problems of interactions between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals. IMT describes four face problematics or dialectics which can occur in intercultural interactions. When applied to feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions, these same tensions can be seen at play. The notion of face comes from Face-Negotiation Theory, and describes the self-image an individual has in the presence of others. Facework refers to the process of building and protecting one's face and others' faces through communication, with positive facework reinforcing the positive image of an individual and negative facework reinforcing a negative image (Littlejohn et al., 2017, p. 412). Thus, face problems as described by IMT are those which occur within this realm of identity negotiation. Understanding these tensions will be essential to mapping out this problem.

The first face problematic described by IMT is identity freezing, which is a face-threat that occurs because of the lack of detailed knowledge one person has about the other (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 199-200). For instance, a feminist aware individual, upon discovering that another individual is feminist unaware, may decide that this is all they need to know about them and that they now understand that person's entire identity. This is a threat to the feminist unaware individual's negative face, because it constrains their avowal of identity to just that one characteristic of being feminist unaware. It also threatens their positive face because it ignores the qualities and characteristics they value in themselves and wish to avow as important aspects of their identity.

The second problematic discussed by IMT is the nonsupport problematic, which occurs when a cultural (or in this case, feminism-related) characteristic is ignored. This is a threat to the individual's positive face because if their cultural membership is in any way important to their avowed identity, ignoring it prevents them from owning this aspect of themselves (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 199-200). This might be seen when a feminist aware individual is not treated as such by a feminist unaware individual, which would be a likely occurrence considering the feminist unaware individual is assumed to have little-to-no knowledge about feminism and what it would mean to self-identify as feminist. This would likely cause the feminist aware individual to feel that they were not fully heard or understood as they would like to be by the feminist unaware individual, making the interaction unsatisfactory and dampening the relationship between the two.

The next problem is the self-other face dialectic, which constitutes the dialectical tension an individual feels between the need to support their own cultural membership face and the need to support that of their partner (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 200). This is a good example of part of the barrier that arises in interactions between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals: owning one's feminist aware identity would automatically disown any feminist unaware identity, and vice versa. Thus, individuals in these interactions must manage the tension and find ways to own their own identity without going so far as to actively disregard or disparage the identity of the other.

The final problem discussed by IMT is the positive-negative face dialectic, which describes the tension felt in deciding whether to support another individual's positive or negative face. In the context of intercultural interactions, a comment about cultural identity may be intended as supportive of positive face, but may instead be felt as a threat to negative face if the

other feels constrained by this singling out of the cultural facet of their identity. This may also happen in the opposite way: a comment intended to ignore cultural identity in favor of seeing individual identity may be felt as a positive face threat which devalues the other's cultural membership (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 200). Thus, in order to avoid constraining the other, individuals must find a balance between supporting the other's positive face and supporting their negative face. Clearly present in feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions, this tension must also be navigated and contributes to the boundary between the two.

Considering feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions as intercultural requires acknowledging these four IMT face problems as inevitably occurring. When these problems go unchecked, they lead to unsatisfactory interactions and feelings of disconnect between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals, and over time this has strengthened a barrier between them to the point that often neither is willing to enter an interaction with the other without trepidation. Accepting this makes it plain to see that because of these frequently arising problems, the barrier is being perpetuated between feminist aware and feminist unaware.

### **Why Barriers are Problematic: Feminism Needs Allies**

Once the barrier is understood to be present, it is vital to understand why this barrier is a problem. To do so, both feminism itself and its goals must be considered. Feminist theory argues that society is built on gendered/masculine principles, and in general feminist movements seek a world where all genders and all people are treated equitably (Littlejohn et al., 2017, p. 330). This world has not yet been achieved, as evidenced by numerous studies concerning gender equity. One striking study is Medved's 2016 study finding that though more women are becoming "breadwinners" for their families, they still must fight against society's expectation that they be primary caregivers and fit into the role of "wife." Furthermore, a Harvard Business Review study

finds that women display almost identical workplace behavior and merit to men, and yet are not advancing at nearly as high a rate as men (Turban et al., 2017). Gendered advertising such as that referenced by Kluch enforces stereotypes that women are weak and reliant on men for need-fulfilment (2015). All of these studies demonstrate that gender discrimination continues to be a very real issue. Thus, feminist movements must continue to seek allies and recruit more individuals to become feminist aware until these inequities are addressed and the goals of feminism are met. Here is where the problem with a barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware becomes clear – if feminism hopes to gain allies, feminist unaware individuals must become feminist aware. A barrier between those who understand and fight for feminist causes and those who do not then becomes a significant challenge to this ally-gaining agenda.

Understanding what it takes to become an ally, in this case meaning to cross the barrier from feminist unaware to feminist aware, is crucial to comprehending this facet of the problem. The Beatley Library Anti-Oppression Guide describes allyship as, “a process, most notably a learning process,” rather than an easily defined identifier for those who wish to operate in solidarity with a certain person or group. Alternate names for this process include “doing ally work,” “acting in solidarity with,” or “being an accomplice to” (Anti-Oppression, 2019). In her paper titled “How to Be an Ally if You Are a Person with Privilege,” Kendall agrees that allyship is fluid and that its definition can vary for each individual. These definitions range in a spectrum from simply having a goal to build loving, trusting relationships with others to intentionally offering one’s self as a sacrifice for the protection of another, marginalized person. The essential aspect of being an ally, in Kendall’s estimation, is alignment with a person or group in a supportive way she describes as having their backs (2003).



In a piece for Everyday Feminism, author Jamie Utt addresses the dissenting opinions over the use of the term ‘ally.’ Citing activist Mia McKenzie’s work for Black Girl Dangerous, he explains that individuals who wish to be allies must avoid seeing ‘ally’ as a fixed part of their identity (Utt, 2014). This creates a problem when those individuals behave in a way that is oppressive, either intentionally or unintentionally, and when confronted use the excuse that their behavior is ‘okay’ because they are an ally. Here, the use of ally as a personal identifier to absolve oneself of accountability for oppressive actions is clearly problematic. This adds to the above descriptions the important caveat: allyship is never a fixed state, but rather a continual learning curve of holding oneself accountable and learning from mistakes. Only then can a person claim to be acting as an ally. They must be open to criticism from the person or group for whom they are advocating, and be ready and willing to adapt accordingly. Allies, particularly those from privileged identity groups who have not firsthand experienced the type of oppression they are opposing, are not required to be perfect. As Kendall explains, “Allies expect to make some mistakes but do not use that as an excuse for inaction” (2003). Misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and accidental offenses are all expected parts of the process, but they must be met with a commitment to learning from them and avoiding their repetition in future.

From this evidence, it seems that allyship is best defined as follows:

*A personal and public commitment to the process of using one’s privilege to advocate, in whatever way possible, for those who are oppressed, while avoiding complacency by continually learning from the marginalized community and correcting mis-steps.*

### **Privilege as a Challenge of Allyship**

Beyond definitions, the existing literature also offers a variety of recommendations for how to act as an ally. Allies must continually address oppression as they see it in their daily lives

(Anti-Oppression, 2019). It is important not to ‘take a break,’ because this is not an option for the people with whom they are allying (Utt, 2014). Allies should seek relationships with both oppressed people and privileged people, so that they can better understand the marginalized experience and better spread awareness to those who do not share this experience. This firsthand understanding of oppression contrasts with their own privilege, and allies must use it to continually ask themselves how privilege shapes their lives and to develop the ability to articulate the societal patterns that allow this (Kendall, 2003). A vital part of the process is building understanding, but also acknowledging that this understanding will never be complete and that it is not the job of those who are experiencing marginalization to teach allies about it. Endres & Gould’s 2009 study of Whiteness and white students in service learning projects found that students tended to acknowledge their white privilege while still buying into the system of Whiteness. This led them to see themselves as ‘helping’ or ‘teaching’ immigrant families, rather than working with and learning from them, and to assume that their Whiteness was an asset rather than a privilege to be navigated. This study’s findings can be translated to the case of individuals interacting in a feminist space because allies should be careful not to conflate their privilege with the automatic need to ‘help’ and rather understand that as feminist allies their goal is to break down the system which affords them this privilege.

Allies should challenge the privileged individuals they encounter who espouse oppressive beliefs (Anti-Oppression, 2019). Though they do not share the personal experience of marginalization, they can use what they have learned to promote equality and seek institutional change through channels available to them as privileged members of society. Utt argues, “As a person who benefits every single day from White privilege, it is not my place to engage People of Color in a discussion about what is or is not racist. That’s not solidarity. However, I have a

very specific responsibility in engaging conversations about racism: talking to other White people” (2014). Utt points out that allies ought not to insert themselves into the identity negotiation of the communities with which they are acting in solidarity. However, it is their responsibility to use their knowledge and call out instances of oppression, using the credit that they automatically are given by other people with privilege. It is important for allies to take these chances, even if they may face repercussions in their own lives (Anti-Oppression, 2019). Kendall agrees, explaining, “This may mean breaking assumed allegiances with those who have the same privileges as you. It is important not to underestimate the consequences of breaking these agreements and to break them in ways that will be most useful to the person or group with whom you are aligning yourself” (2003). She goes on to clarify that the goal of speaking out should not be to promote oneself and create an image of being a progressive or ‘good’ person, but to use privilege in order to interrupt and if possible correct oppressive speech or behavior. Some privileged group members may interpret this type of advocacy as a betrayal of their group and react negatively, accusing the ally of having no sense of humor or being a goody-goody. This potential for negative reactions is where commitment becomes important – allies cannot claim to be acting in solidarity with a group if they do not actively work toward the betterment of that group. Allyship is not passive. Thus, barring situations where one may be injured or otherwise seriously negatively impacted, allies must accept the consequences of speaking out.

### **Listening as a Challenge of Allyship**

Finally, allies have the job of knowing when to step back and yield to the people for whom they are advocating. An ally should never monopolize emotional space, or ask marginalized people to emotionally support them in their journey as an ally (Utt, 2014). Emotions are a natural part of the process of involving oneself with systematic oppression and all

of the injustices it causes, but the emotional labor of those who are oppressed is already great enough without having to also support allies who are essentially privileged onlookers. Instead, allies need to learn to listen, and listen effectively. Firstly, it is important to hear as many marginalized voices as possible to fully understand the core issues of the community (Utt, 2014). Secondly, it is important to be able to hear those voices in a responsible way. As Tanja Dreher points out in her paper on listening across difference, “It is important to avoid simplistic and essentializing binaries of privileged and marginalized, silenced and silencer lest we lose sight of the complexities of the workings of privilege and power” (p. 451, 2009). Hearing voices only as ‘privileged’ or ‘marginalized’ narrows the scope of understanding for an ally and prevents them from seeing important intersectional identities. Furthermore, Dreher’s listening across difference recommends that privileged listeners always keep in mind how both historic and contemporary power structures contextualize their interactions. Rather than simply understanding the experience of one individual, a listener must listen for and understand their experience within the networks of privilege and power where they reside (Dreher, p. 451-452, 2009). With these concepts in mind, Dreher argues that listeners will be able to broaden their focus and see more clearly the full picture of privilege and oppression they are hoping to alter. Allies using effective listening techniques will have a better chance at being able to articulate, and thereby advocate for, the need for change .

Allyship is a complex process which must be continually negotiated. Skilled allies cannot become complacent or assume that their previous work in advocacy justifies problematic behavior. They must recognize the never-ending quality of their commitment, because true allies do not take breaks owing to their understanding that the people they advocate for do not have that option. Just as marginalization constantly shapes lives, so too does privilege, and allies must

be able to identify and articulate the ways in which their privilege affects their daily experiences. While this privilege-checking serves as a reminder of why their support of the cause is important, it also serves to remind allies of their power to effect change and their duty to call out the oppressive behaviors of those in their privilege group. This is the work of allies, and in order to maintain their understanding of what is oppressive they must truly listen and yield space to those in marginalized groups, allowing their voices to be heard and amplified. These recommendations are merely a starting point, but they will allow allies to see how their role must be defined and what steps they should take in order to begin their solidarity commitment.

**Problem Defined: Need for Allies is Hindered by Intercultural Barriers**

This background on allyship provides important insight to the nature of the problem at hand. In order to break down the barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware, feminist aware individuals must be willing to bring feminist unaware individuals on board as allies and understand the benefits allies have to offer. Furthermore, feminist unaware individuals must understand what it is to be an ally, and must choose to take on this challenge in order to become feminist aware. The nature of this problem, then, is how to mitigate intercultural problems like the face problems of IMT so that feminist unaware and feminist aware individuals can be encouraged to act as allies for each other and for the gender equity movement as a whole. Allyship is clearly not a small commitment, so solutions are needed which break down barriers between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals, thus making it easier to build interpersonal connections and in turn encouraging feminist unaware individuals to make the commitment to allying with feminism. Improving these interactions to build connections on both sides will also reduce animosity and the feeling of division which is so characteristic of and damaging to feminist movements.

### **Solutions from Existing Literature**

As expressed above, a solution to this problem must be able to break down barriers and build connections between feminist aware and feminist unaware. Reviewing relevant communication and practice literature, insight into possible solutions can be found in studies of hostile audience persuasion, intercultural contact, and Identity Management Theory's discussion of intercultural relationship stages, identity problems, and potential solutions to those problems.

#### **Intercultural Communication as Hostile Audience Persuasion**

Hostile audience persuasion literature may at first seem irrelevant to this case, but in fact may provide useful insight. Considering feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions as intercultural not only opens the door to intercultural communication literature, but also to a new way of thinking about these interactions. Because of their perceived intercultural nature it is logical to think that there may be hostility between the two parties in these interactions, due to problems of intercultural communication such as identity freezing described by IMT. Seeing this side of feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions is helpful in understanding why hostility may arise, because intercultural communication literature predicts these kinds of hostility-producing problems in intercultural interactions. Furthermore, if the goal is to improve these interactions by removing this hostile barrier and fostering connections between the two individuals, then some amount of persuasion will be required to rectify the difference of opinion regarding feminism. This is where hostile audience persuasion literature can be of use, because it offers solutions to the difficulty of persuasion between individuals with diametrically opposed views.

Regarding interpersonal persuasion, Lindskold, Han, & Betz's (1986) work finds that in situations where individuals are benefitted by cooperation, a statement of intent to cooperate

should be rephrased and repeated in order to be made more convincing. In their study, when one individual made such statements multiple times in different ways, they were effective in convincing the other party to cooperate. This outcome occurred even when the audience was hostile, meaning the other individual was not initially inclined to cooperate. The researchers cite increased liking and trusting of the persuader as outcomes that precipitated the cooperation. From this work, the technique of clearly stating one's intent to cooperate with a hostile party and, upon receiving a hostile response, rephrasing and repeating this intention can help to persuade an audience not inclined to like or trust – such as a feminist aware individual who assumes all feminist unaware individuals are ignorant and unsuited to supporting gender equality.

More recommendations on persuading hostile audiences come from professional speaker Larry Tracy. In a speech regarding persuasion of hostile audiences in public speaking, Tracy comments that, “we all tend to accept information from people we like, and we reject it from people we do not like” (2005). This once again references the connection between being liked and being trusted or cooperated with by an audience. If an individual can behave in ways which make them seem likeable and project a sense of genuine trustworthiness, their audience is more likely to believe their goodness and be persuaded to their point or goal. Tracy also references the importance of anticipating the response of your audience and knowing where they might ‘attack’ or disagree with you (2005). In public speaking this might be used to form a rebuttal section of an argument, but this idea can be translated for interpersonal interactions and suggests that pre-planning responses to anticipated points of disagreement may help to be more convincing and avoid becoming flustered or defensive.

Personal judgement is another clear problem in situations with hostile audiences – the person approaching the hostile individual is likely to feel judged and rejected initially, and this

does not facilitate cooperation. Tracy recommends individuals avoid these emotional and unproductive pitfalls by allowing the other to see them as human. Talking about something other than the issue at hand offers opportunities to find common ground and demonstrate that a productive relationship is possible (Tracy, 2005). Having the goal of finding a shared experience or other relatable point is therefore a way of turning a hostile audience into a receptive one .

Furthermore regarding hostile audiences, a face-saving statement for the hostile individual may be helpful in bringing about a positive outcome. Knowing that the individual is pre-inclined to be hostile, it is likely that their initial communication behavior may be unpleasant. If they are later persuaded to see a different point of view, they will likely be embarrassed by this original conduct. To help smooth this transition and again avoid defensiveness, Tracy recommends offering a statement which allows the other to save face, pointing out, “people don't want to admit they were wrong, and you cannot persuade people to change their mind; they must persuade themselves” (2005). In the case of a feminist unaware individual approaching a feminist aware individual who may initially make derogatory comments regarding those who do not identify as feminist, the feminist unaware individual might use the following statement in order to offer an opportunity for face-saving:

*“I agree, there are a lot of people who behave in ways which are offensive and oppressive to women. I can understand why you would be hesitant to trust my motivations and include me in your network of allies. I hope I can convince you that I am not one of those people.”*

This helps to persuade the feminist aware individual to see the feminist unaware individual as well-intentioned, understanding, likeable and trustworthy, which will again encourage cooperation, and allows them to save face by justifying their initial hostility.



A more recent study of hostile audience persuasion comes from Broockman and Kalla's work in door-to-door canvassing. The researchers found that when canvassers for transgender rights approached voters and led them through a perspective-taking exercise, those voters were more likely to support transgender rights in election voting months later than those who had not participated in perspective-taking (2016). This perspective-taking exercise was as simple as asking voters to talk about a time when they personally had felt judged for something that made them different, then encouraging them to see the connection between this experience and the experience of transgender individuals. The results that voter's opinions (or at the very least, their voting inclinations) were actually affected by this simple, 10-minute exercise is promising for the purposes of addressing the barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware. If the results are translatable, it is highly likely that a perspective-taking exercise between a feminist unaware and feminist aware individual might help to encourage the feminist unaware individual to relate to the feminist aware individual and change their judgement of them and of feminists in general. Similarly, if a feminist aware individual were to take the perspective of a feminist unaware individual, they might be able to see more clearly what motivates that individual and recognize that feminist unaware does not necessarily correlate to anti-feminist (helping to avoid the judgement that someone feminist unaware cannot cross the barrier and become feminist aware or be an ally). Felton, Crowell & Liu had a similar result in their study on argumentative writing, finding that when opposed individuals had a dialogue and reached consensus on an issue before writing about their individual perspectives, they were more likely to include statements from the opposite perspective and genuinely refute them than individuals who did not engage in dialogue (2015). This is another example demonstrating that if individuals try to understand each other's point of view when they disagree, they are more likely to see both sides and come to consensus,

or at least gain respect for the other. Perspective-taking as exercised by both Broockman & Kalla and Felton et al. is therefore an example of a hostile audience persuasion technique which is applicable to breaking down the barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware.

Evidently, hostile audience persuasion is an important skill that might offer solutions to the problem at hand. It is possible that both a feminist aware individual and feminist unaware individual may present as hostile audiences to each other when they begin to communicate. To help this interaction go more smoothly and have a positive outcome, individuals should be prepared to use hostile audience persuasion tactics such as repeating and rephrasing intent to cooperate or work together, anticipating attacks and formulating logical, non-defensive responses, finding common ground outside of the issues at hand, offering a face-saving statement, and perspective-taking. These tactics are practical ways that both feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals can approach interpersonal interactions and increase their chances of breaking the barrier between them.

### **Interpersonal Solutions**

A second possibility for improving interactions between feminist aware and feminist unaware is to consider intercultural contact and interpersonal bonding literature. Both of these sources aim to mitigate potential rifts and encourage connection-making between individuals who may be coming from very different belief systems or backgrounds. Again, while feminist aware and feminist unaware identities are not cultural identities in the traditional sense, for the purposes of this work they will be considered as such in order to gain insights from intercultural communication literature.

**Interpersonal bonding.**

While there is an abundance of scholarship concerning interpersonal bonding, a few key pieces will be most important to this relationship formation between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals. Firstly, both individuals must be aware of the impression they make and how information they share contributes to that impression, positively or negatively. Interpersonal communication requires individuals to form the myriad complex aspects of their identity into a few key elements which they present to others as their 'self.' This self-presentation is shaped by individuals' own agendas as well as societal structures and biases, and the process by which details are selected and styled is termed "impression regulation" (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Individuals need to be aware of this impression regulation process and recognize where their privilege may come into the way they style themselves – for instance, feminist aware individuals assuming their superiority in understanding gender equity issues over feminist unaware individuals. For another example, feminist unaware individuals may assume they need to defend themselves for not identifying as feminist and become defensive in their communication. Checking these assumptions within their own self-presentation will help individuals to avoid inadvertent offenses that will negatively affect the other's impression of them and contribute to identity freezing and other IMT face problems.

Secondly, it is important to consider the role of humor in relationship building. Humor is often an automatic response to discomfort, and can be both a positive and negative in interpersonal bonding. A study by Mette, Hrelec & Wilkens finds that the effect of demonstrating a sense of humor depends on the reputation of the communicator. If humor was unexpected, the response was largely positive, but if humor or un-serious behavior was predicted then the use of humor tended to not affect the response (1971). From this, it is important to

recognize that humor is best used when appropriate, rather than as a general rule. If the anticipated response to a feminist unaware individual wishing to become a feminist ally was that they would not be a serious advocate, then humor might not work in their favor in order to change this impression and increase an interpersonal bond. However, if an interaction began and was heading in a positive direction, individuals might be able to use unexpected humor to increase their bond.

These few aspects of interpersonal communication if used appropriately could lead to quicker and better bonding between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals on a one-on-one level. Again, this would be helpful because building an interpersonal relationship would increase positive outcomes of interactions and mitigate IMT face problems. Furthermore, formation of an interpersonal relationship generally indicates liking and trust, which are vital factors in building allyship. Thus, feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals can use these tactics of impression regulation and humor to create a better relationship upon which to support their advocacy.

### **Intercultural Contact Hypothesis.**

Now, turning to intercultural communication literature, there are several points regarding how these interactions may be improved when considered as intercultural contact. The Contact Hypothesis, for instance, suggests several conditions which ought to be met for intercultural contact which facilitates positive attitude change and intergroup communication. These conditions include that “contact should not be superficial, but should have the potential to extend beyond that situation and involve many of the people from both groups,” “strong normative and institutional support for contact is necessary,” “cooperation within the groups should be maximized and competition between groups should be minimized,” “an equal number of

members from each group should meet,” “similarity of group members on non-status dimensions (beliefs, values, etc.) appears desirable,” “contact should be voluntary,” and “individuation of group members should be promoted” (Kerssen-Griep & Eifler, 2008). Taken as guidelines, these conditions provide an excellent start for practical recommendations to improve interactions and promote understanding between feminist aware and feminist unaware.

### **IMT Solutions**

Returning to Identity Management Theory, the guiding intercultural theory for this work, more insights into potential solutions can be found. The IMT face problems have been important in understanding the barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware, but this theory also has much to offer in terms of practical changes to be made. In particular, the theory suggests three general stages of intercultural relationship formation as well as strategies for dealing with the four face problems usually present in intercultural encounters.

#### **Intercultural relationship stages.**

According to Identity Management Theory, there are three stages to the building of an intercultural relationship. The first stage, trial, occurs as individuals attempt to navigate the difference between them and the discomfort or uncertainty it produces. This stage involves trial and error, as often individuals will make mistakes that could potentially damage the relationship because they don't have an established rapport to fall back on. If participants make it past this first stage, they enter the second stage, named enmeshment. In the enmeshment stage, individuals essentially ignore their difference and instead focus on what they have in common or can build together. This may include actions such as joking, nicknaming each other, and generally becoming more comfortable and building a rapport. From this stage emerges a solid, relational identity which both participants share in. Finally, using this shared identity as a

foundation, individuals may move to the third stage, renegotiation. In this stage, the cultural identities of each individual re-enter the conversation, and because of their established relationship the individuals are able to negotiate them more openly with each other (Ting-Toomey, 2009).

In the context of two individuals who may have different views on feminism or different backgrounds due to their gendered experience of the world, these stages might be used to better understand how a successful relationship could be built. If individuals are able to make it past the trial stage and into the enmeshment stage, they would be more likely to reach the renegotiation stage and have a potentially productive conversation regarding feminism. Particularly in cases where individuals are at odds, the setting aside of differences required by the enmeshment stage seems key to moving forward. By seeing each other as more than opponents and building a mutual rapport outside of their differences, individuals may be more charitable with each other when they return to that conversation and more open to hearing each other's points of view. This kind of open dialogue is vital in building relationships between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals and, as a byproduct, uniting more individuals in feminism.

### **Suggestions for face problems.**

Identity Management Theory is also useful in its discussion of solutions to the four major face problematics and dialectics which arise in intercultural, interpersonal interactions: identity freezing, the nonsupport problematic, the self-other face dialectic, and the positive-negative face dialectic. Focusing in particular on identity freezing, several strategies for mitigating this problem are suggested and organized into four categories: self positive face support, mutual positive face support, other positive face support, and mutual negative face support. Self positive face support strategies aim to protect the individual's own face when it is threatened by an

identity freezing interaction, and include educating the other person about identity freezing, a direct request to stop identity freezing, asking the other person to empathize with the feeling of being stereotyped, and clarifying to see if the other person was intentionally performing the identity freezing act. Mutual positive face support strategies aim to build a positive identity as a dyad and include humor and laughter. Other positive face support strategies focus on supporting the other person's face by ignoring a face-threatening act and smoothing it over with acceptance or an apology for fulfilling a stereotype put on them by the other. Finally, mutual negative face support strategies honor the autonomy of each individual in an intercultural interaction by ignoring or avoiding situations in which stereotypes and identity freezing may occur (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 201). These strategies are all potential solutions for identity freezing which could be used by either individual in feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions.

While identity freezing strategies will be most applicable to this case, there are also a few strategies for dealing with the self other face problematic which offer potential solutions. A mutual positive face support suggestion, for instance, is to support both individual's identities in alternate areas or settings (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 202). This suggestion may function well in interpersonal interactions between multiple sets of feminist aware/feminist unaware partners, as individuals could alternate between supporting their own identity and that of their partner when moving through different interaction spaces. Another relevant strategy is in the area of mutual negative face support, where it is suggested that interactions which cause self other dialectic tension to arise be avoided (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 201-202). This is similar to the strategy suggested for identity freezing, but is clearly applicable for dealing with the self other face problematic as well.

Taken together, these suggestions for how to deal with problems arising in intercultural interactions provide an excellent basis for developing a solution to the barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals. Hostile audience persuasion literature offers significant insights such as the importance of face-saving, finding common ground, and perspective taking. Interpersonal bonding strategies such as impression regulation and appropriate use of humor can be applied to encourage positive, relationship-building interactions. The guidance from intercultural literature including the contact hypothesis and the strategies for dealing with IMT face problems gives clear recommendations for how an activity hoping to break barriers and build connections between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals might be structured. These streams of knowledge form the basis for a genuine, theory-backed solution to the problem described above.

### **10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections: An Activity as a Proposed Solution**

From this work of problematizing the feminist aware/feminist unaware barrier and seeking potential solutions offered by scholarship, the resulting resource is a feminist, theory-based activity titled 10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections (Appendix I). As its title suggests, the activity uses the theoretical and practical suggestions offered above to guide two individuals, one feminist aware and feminist unaware, through a relationship-building process designed to break through the barrier between them and encourage the building of genuine connection. Table 1 (Appendix II) draws connections between each of the 10 steps and the theoretical guidance that inspired them. This creates a clear picture of the hope for each step in terms of the barrier breaking and connection building process.

10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections is an activity directed toward any group in which there may be differing opinions surrounding feminism, including classrooms,



workplaces, recreational clubs, and churches. It aims to separate the group into feminist-aware and feminist-unaware individuals, then pair up one of each and have them engage in a 10-step dialogue process. The goal is for them to better understand each other and avoid the face problems predicted by IMT, this being an intercultural encounter. The activity begins with an introductory portion designed to fit the enmeshment stage of relationship building, where the pair will learn about each other as individuals and build a shared relationship (complete with a team name) rather than focusing on their differences. Then, the later steps bring the pair back to the discussion of feminism, mimicking the renegotiation stage of relationship building. Here, the aim is to rely on the individual relationship built up in the first phase to encourage open, respectful, common-ground-finding dialogue. Individuals are not necessarily expected to walk away with their opinions of feminism changed, but rather to come away with a better sense of how to approach a conversation with someone whose opinion differs from their own. The activity closes with a leader encouraging participants to think about the real-life applications of the 10 steps, and hopefully to see themselves willingly engaging in more of these kinds of interactions in the future.

In general, this activity is designed to encourage the interpersonal bonding conditions (impression regulation, appropriate use of humor) from above (Mette et al., 1971). The encouragement of hearing from both partners equally and coming to consensus should lead to impression regulation, with each partner aiming not to over-step the other. The activity also takes on a serious tone with the discussion statements and don'ts list, which should avoid the overuse of humor if participants commit to taking the steps seriously. It additionally hopes to encourage the concern for face-saving rather than face-threatening and finding of common ground recommended by hostile audience persuasion literature.

Furthermore, this activity fulfills several conditions of the contact hypothesis beyond those mentioned in Table 1. In particular, the activity is designed to be administered in an institution by a group leader, whether a teacher in a classroom, a manager in a workplace, or a leader in a religious group. This fulfills the contact hypothesis requirement that intercultural interactions should occur in settings with strong normative and institutional support. By being encouraged to interact with individuals who have a different relationship with feminism than themselves, individuals are directly supported by the administering institution in doing so. Furthermore, the activity fulfills the requirement that “contact should not be superficial, but should have the potential to extend beyond that situation and involve many of the people from both groups,” because as mentioned above it employs a serious tone for several steps and encourages participants to seriously address their deep beliefs rather than remaining superficial in their interaction (Kerssen-Griep & Eifler, 2008). The debrief section of the activity encourages participants to think beyond simply this one interaction and consider applying the principles of the activity to interactions in the world beyond, which also speaks to this goal of extension beyond one situation and involvement of people other than those initially addressed. The contact hypothesis also suggests that contact should be voluntary, which is why the instructor guide includes a clause that participants cannot be forced to participate, and that an equal number of members of each group should be represented, which is why participants are to be paired up in feminist aware/feminist unaware pairs whenever possible (Kerssen-Griep & Eifler, 2008).

As referenced in step 6, the 6 Feminist Don'ts list (Appendix I) is also based in theoretical understandings from both the problem and solution sections above. The hope of creating a list of commons “don'ts” was to sum up the ideas discussed above in a way which was palatable and easily discussable for partners engaging in the activity. With this list, they could be

guided to discuss feminism and their views in a way that was structured and theory-backed. The list is also justified and connected back to theory in a table format (Appendix II, Table 2).

### **Conclusion**

Considering feminist aware/feminist unaware interactions as intercultural allowed for the creation of an activity to encourage conversation and understanding between two opposed individuals, rooted in feminist values. This activity functions as a compilation of solutions from theory to the intercultural interaction problems eloquently described by Identity Management Theory. It also acts as a potential solution to the problem of gaining allies for feminist movements, as well as breaking down the barrier between those wishing to be allies and those already associated with feminism.

This study was limited to addressing the problem of the barrier between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals. However, the produced activity could be altered to address a number of social problems, were they to be considered as intercultural encounters. Common “ism” barriers which could be addressed include racism, classism, and heterosexism. Other possible barriers to be addressed could include those between individuals with differing political views. If the activity’s prompt quotes and “don’ts” list were adapted to address these differences of opinion instead of those surrounding feminism, it is highly possible that the activity would function in much the same way it is expected to for the cause of feminism. In other words, this activity not only could help improve interactions between feminist aware and feminist unaware individuals, but also break down barriers and encourage connections between people with any kind of socially-rooted opposing view.

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## Appendix I

### 10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections: Instructor Guide

#### Materials

Printed handouts (attached below)  
Pens

#### Set Up

Select the appropriate variation of the “10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections” handout based on your organization type: company/workplace, classroom, or community organization. Print copies of this handout for each participant, as well as copies of the “6 Feminist Don’ts” list for each participant.

#### Leading the Activity

Begin by ensuring that each participant is willing to participate – participation should be voluntary, not forced. Next, make participants aware of your intention with the activity and the need for honesty when pairing up. Sample statement: “This activity is designed to encourage conversations with someone you might disagree with, so we need a way of differentiating between people who are likely to agree and people who are likely to disagree. In the next phase of the activity, please try to be as honest as possible – of course, we won’t really know if you are honest or not, and that’s fine, but it will make the activity more effective for everyone if you are.”

To create pairs, inform participants that you will create a spectrum of belief from one side of the room to the other and that they must place themselves according to where they feel they best fit.

Ask participants to stand to one side of the room if they would consider themselves described by any of the following: “feminist aware, comfortable with the concept of feminism, feminist.”

Ask participants to stand to the other side of the room if they would consider themselves described by any of the following: “feminist unaware, uncomfortable with the concept of feminism, not feminist.”

Again, this is a spectrum, so participants may place themselves as close to the middle as they like on their respective side based on how they wish to identify.

Once everyone has found their place, try to pair up those who have identified with differing beliefs. If there are substantially more participants on one side than the other, pair them up within their own side according to how close or far they fall from the middle. Use your best judgement as a facilitator to try and make pairings where each pair will at least have some (perceived) difference of opinion, be it large or small.

Ask pairs to spread out throughout the room for privacy. While each pair finds their own space, pass out copies of the printed “10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections” sheet and the attached “6 Feminist Don’ts” list, along with pens to make changes and take notes.

Once materials have been distributed and pairs have found their own space to work, instruct participants to begin working through the 10 steps.

**Debriefing the Activity for a Meaningful Takeaway**

When participants have completed the final step of the activity, take some time to debrief with them. Ask them their thoughts on the process and what they might take away from it. Did they change their opinion on anything, or learn anything unexpected?

Guide them to think about the possibility of repeating a similar process in a more natural way, next time they should encounter someone whose beliefs are different from their own.

**10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections (Organizational/Professional Setting)**

*Complete the following 10 steps with your partner.*

1. Learn 3 random facts about your partner. Examples: their favorite breakfast, their least favorite color, where in the world they would like to travel right now.
2. Come up with a team name for the two of you by combining parts of each of your names, or come up with a secret handshake or greeting gesture.
3. Introduce your team to another team with your team name and one of the facts you each learned earlier.
4. Respond to the following statement: People living in masculine bodies will never fully understand the experience of people living in female bodies, but they can be allies to women and be feminists/identify with feminist values.
5. Respond to the following statement: Gaining more allies/more feminists is never a bad thing for the movement. There should be no barrier to the type of person that is allowed to become a feminist – anyone who wishes to ally themselves with the movement is able to and should be encouraged to.
6. Read the list of don'ts. Do any surprise you? Would you change any?
7. Agree with each other on at least some part of your answers to the above questions. If possible, note any personal experiences that may overlap or relate to that of your partner.
8. Make any edits to the list of don'ts you both agree on.
9. Make a commitment: Sign your names and your team name at the bottom as a sign of your commitment to following these from now on.
10. Verbally reaffirm your commitment to each other and to your agreement.



**10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections (Classroom Setting)**

*Complete the following 10 steps with your partner.*

1. Learn 3 random facts about your partner. Examples: their favorite breakfast, their least favorite color, where in the world they would like to travel right now.
2. Come up with a team name for the two of you by combining parts of each of your names, or come up with a secret handshake or greeting gesture.
3. Introduce your team to another team with your team name and one of the facts you each learned earlier.
4. Respond to the following statement: People living in masculine bodies will never fully understand the experience of people living in female bodies, but they can be allies to women and be feminists/identify with feminist values.
5. Respond to the following statement: Gaining more allies/more feminists is never a bad thing for the movement. There should be no barrier to the type of person that is allowed to become a feminist – anyone who wishes to ally themselves with the movement is able to and should be encouraged to.
6. Read the list of don'ts. Do any surprise you? Would you change any?
7. Agree with each other on at least some part of your answers to the above questions. If possible, note any personal experiences that may overlap or relate to that of your partner.
8. Make any edits to the list of don'ts you both agree on.
9. Make a commitment: Come back together as a group. Share the list you came up with and talk about how you and your partner reached a consensus.
10. Verbally reaffirm your commitment to each other and to your agreement.

**10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections (Community Setting)**

*Complete the following 10 steps with your partner.*

1. Learn 3 random facts about your partner. Examples: their favorite breakfast, their least favorite color, where in the world they would like to travel right now.
2. Come up with a team name for the two of you by combining parts of each of your names, or come up with a secret handshake or greeting gesture.
3. Introduce your team to another team with your team name and one of the facts you each learned earlier.
4. Respond to the following statement: People living in masculine bodies will never fully understand the experience of people living in female bodies, but they can be allies to women and be feminists/identify with feminist values.
5. Respond to the following statement: Gaining more allies/more feminists is never a bad thing for the movement. There should be no barrier to the type of person that is allowed to become a feminist – anyone who wishes to ally themselves with the movement is able to and should be encouraged to.
6. Read the list of don'ts. Do any surprise you? Would you change any?
7. Agree with each other on at least some part of your answers to the above questions. If possible, note any personal experiences that may overlap or relate to that of your partner.
8. Make any edits to the list of don'ts you both agree on.
9. Make a commitment: Complete the following phrase using something you feel comfortable committing to from the list: "In the future, I will \_". Look your partner in the eye when you tell them this.
10. Verbally reaffirm your commitment to each other and to your agreement.

### **6 Feminist Don'ts**

1. Don't use words that systematically disadvantage women (bitch) or language that devalues the feminist movement (angry feminist, feminazi). Ever. Even as a joke. Even when there are no women present to hear you.
2. Don't make value judgements of others based on their gendered body
3. Don't give up after one bad interaction – if you are misjudged by one individual, do not conflate this with misjudgment by the entire feminist movement.
4. Don't get defensive – to avoid this, pay attention to places where you may feel attacked or topics where you are insecure and formulate logical, non-defensive responses to these specific points. This way, you are prepared rather than caught off guard.
5. Don't assume that societal privilege is earned, deserved, or an automatic invitation to help those less privileged.
6. Don't use humor too frequently to demonstrate that you are serious about talking about/supporting feminism.

## Appendix II

Table 1: Theoretical Justification for 10 Steps to Break Barriers and Build Connections Activity

Activity Step	Justification
<p>1. Learn 3 random facts about your partner. Examples: their favorite breakfast, their least favorite color, where in the world they would like to travel right now.</p>	<p><b>Enmeshment stage of IMT</b>            In the enmeshment stage, individuals essentially ignore their difference and instead focus on what they have in common or can build together (Ting-Toomey, 2009).  <i>In this case the difference to be ignored is feminist aware/feminist unaware, which is achieved by avoiding this topic and learning other random facts</i></p> <p><b>Individuation</b> (from contact hypothesis)            "Individuation of group members should be promoted" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008  <i>Encouraging participants to learn about each other as individuals rather than as cultural members/feminist aware/feminist unaware promotes individuation</i></p> <p><b>Mutual negative face support strategy</b> (for dealing with identity freezing, from IMT)            "Avoiding interaction that causes the dialectic tension" - Gudykunst, p. 201-202  <i>Allows participants to ignore the identity category they would freeze on the other (feminist aware/feminist unaware) by learning unrelated facts</i></p> <p><b>Finding Similarity</b> (from contact hypothesis)            "Similarity of group members on non-status dimensions (beliefs, values, etc.) appears desirable" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008  <i>Seeing each other as individuals and talking about random individual facts such as these might result in finding similarities - these would be similarities other than beliefs/values, and therefore improve the interaction</i></p>
<p>2. Come up with a team name for the two of you by combining parts of each of your names, or come up with a secret handshake or greeting gesture.</p>	<p><b>Enmeshment stage of IMT</b>            In the enmeshment stage, individuals essentially ignore their difference and instead focus on what they have in common or can build together. This may include actions such as joking, nicknaming each other, and generally becoming more comfortable and building a rapport. From this stage emerges a solid, relational identity which both participants share in (Ting-Toomey, 2009).  <i>Functions as a nickname-type builder of mutual face, naming the duo and therefore creating a language symbol for their relationship</i></p>

<p>3. Introduce your team to another team with your team name and one of the facts you each learned earlier.</p>	<p><b>Mutual positive face support strategy</b> (for dealing with Self-Other face dialectic, in IMT)          "Supporting both one's own and the partner's identities in alternate areas or alternate occasions" - Gudykunst, p. 202  <i>Interacting with other groups provides an alternate setting in which partners may show their support for each other's identities</i></p> <p><b>Mutual negative face support strategy</b> (for dealing with Self-Other face dialectic &amp; identity freezing, in IMT)          "Avoiding interaction that causes the dialectic tension" - Gudykunst, p. 201-202  <i>In this step participants are not talking about each other in terms of feminist aware/feminist unaware, but in terms of other identity categories, thus avoiding interactions surrounding their feminist aware or unaware identity which may cause tension</i></p>
<p>4. Respond to the following statement: People living in masculine bodies will never fully understand the experience of people living in female bodies, but they <i>can</i> be allies to women and be feminists/identify with feminist values.</p>	<p><b>Renegotiation stage</b>          In this stage, the cultural identities of each individual re-enter the conversation, and because of their established relationship the individuals are able to negotiate them more openly with each other (Ting-Toomey, 2009).  <i>Now that the relationship is somewhat established, return to the conversation of feminism where differences may be found. Having the relationship basis from the previous steps makes it more likely that individuals will be able to renegotiate differing opinions on these statements.</i></p> <p><b>Education strategy</b> (for dealing with Identity Freezing)          "educating about the stereotype/identity freezing" - Gudykunst, p. 201  <i>Educates by pointing out stereotypes about whether or not people with certain bodies can be feminist</i></p> <p><b>Request simple &amp; request empathy strategies</b> (for dealing with Identity Freezing)          "asking to stop stereotyping/identity freezing," "asking to empathize about being stereotyped/identity frozen" - Gudykunst, p. 201  <i>Functions simultaneously as a male/masc-bodied person asking for empathy and to stop identity freezing as feminist-unaware and as a femme/female-bodied person asking for empathy</i></p> <p><b>Non-superficial</b> (from contact hypothesis)          "contact should not be superficial, but should have the potential to extend beyond that situation and involve many of the people from both groups" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008  <i>This step asks participants to discuss deeply-held beliefs, moving beyond superficial interaction</i></p>

<p>5. Respond to the following statement: Gaining more allies/more feminists is never a bad thing for the movement. There should be no barrier to the type of person that is allowed to become a feminist – anyone who wishes to ally themselves with the movement is able to and should be encouraged to.</p>	<p><b>Renegotiation stage</b> (from IMT) In this stage, the cultural identities of each individual re-enter the conversation, and because of their established relationship the individuals are able to negotiate them more openly with each other (Ting-Toomey, 2009). <i>Second repetition of the process above.</i> <b>Education strategy</b> (for dealing with Identity Freezing, from IMT) "educating about the stereotype/identity freezing" - Gudykunst, p. 201 <i>Pointing out that stereotypes about who can or cannot be feminist exist and are unhelpful to the cause</i> <b>Request simple &amp; request empathy strategies</b> (for dealing with Identity Freezing, from IMT) "asking to stop stereotyping/identity freezing," "asking to empathize about being stereotyped/identity frozen" - Gudykunst, p. 201 <i>Functions to directly ask feminist aware to stop identity freezing feminist unaware, as well as educating and requesting empathy for feminist cause by showing that anyone can identify with the movement</i> <b>Non-superficial</b> (from contact hypothesis) "contact should not be superficial, but should have the potential to extend beyond that situation and involve many of the people from both groups" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008 <i>This step asks participants to discuss deeply-held beliefs, moving beyond superficial interaction</i></p>
<p>6. Read the "6 Feminist Don'ts" handout. Do any surprise you? Would you change any?</p>	<p><b>Self support strategy</b> (for dealing with Positive-Negative face dialectic, from IMT) "allowing time and space for the partner to support partner's own identity (e.g., letting the partner go back to home country)" - Gudykunst, p. 203 <i>Allows individuals to speak freely from their home perspective (feminist aware or feminist unaware) in voicing their opinion on don'ts list</i> <b>Non-superficial</b> (from contact hypothesis) "contact should not be superficial, but should have the potential to extend beyond that situation and involve many of the people from both groups" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008 <i>This step asks participants to discuss deeply-held beliefs, moving beyond superficial interaction</i></p>

<p>7. Agree with each other on at least some part of your answers to the above questions. If possible, note any personal experiences that may overlap or relate to that of your partner.</p>	<p><b>Importance of finding common ground to reconcile differences in opinion</b>          "students who were asked to reach consensus in a dialogue prior to writing were more likely to cite other-side arguments generally...and more likely to reconcile valid other-side arguments with their global position through the synthesis strategy" - Felton et al., p. 327  <i>intentionally looking for consensus means participants are more likely to listen to and validate or reconcile views of their partners, which would lead to better understanding and appreciation of the opposing view</i></p> <p><b>Perspective-taking exercise</b>          "Canvassers first asked each voter to talk about a time when they themselves were judged negatively for being different. The canvassers then encouraged voters to see how their own experience offered a window into transgender people's experiences, hoping to facilitate voters' ability to take transgender people's perspectives." - Broockman  <i>borrowing from this study's perspective-taking exercise, this step asks participants to imagine how their experience could help them understand the experience of their partner, which then might influence them to feel more empathy</i></p> <p><b>Cooperation and agreement</b> (from contact hypothesis)          "cooperation within the groups should be maximized and competition between groups should be minimized" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008  <i>Asking partners to find agreement forces them to cooperate rather than compete in order to complete this step</i></p>
<p>8. Make any edits to the list of don'ts you both agree on.</p>	<p><b>Mutual negative face support strategy</b> (for dealing with Self Other dialectic)          "avoidance - avoiding interaction that causes the dialectic tension, difference recognition - recognizing the differences in identities and in some cases choosing to behave in separate ways" - Gudykunst, p. 202  <i>Essentially, agreeing to disagree, talking out different points and avoiding those which cause tension by changing them into something mutually agreeable or only selecting those from the list upon which both agree</i></p> <p><b>Mindfulness</b> (from Face Negotiation Theory)          "Mindfulness—one must choose to seek multiple perspectives on the same event." -Ting-Toomey  <i>Competent intercultural communication requires seeking multiple perspectives - in order to agree, participants must seek and listen to the perspective of their partner</i></p> <p><b>Cooperation and agreement</b> (from contact hypothesis)          "cooperation within the groups should be maximized and competition between groups should be minimized" – Kerssen-Griep &amp; Eifler, 2008</p>

	<i>Asking partners to find agreement forces them to cooperate rather than compete in order to complete this step</i>
9a. For an organizational/professional setting: Sign your names and your team name at the bottom as a sign of your commitment to following these from now on.	<b>Mediation Technique</b> <i>Signature shows commitment to shared goals</i>
9b. For a classroom setting: Come back together as a group. Share the list you came up with and talk about how you and your partner reached a consensus.	<b>Presentation of mutual face</b> <i>Should serve to strengthen mutual face by presenting shared ideas publicly, demonstrate commitment to partner by owning ideas and process</i>
9c. For an interpersonal/youth group/church/club/family setting: Complete the following phrase using something you feel comfortable committing to from the list: "In the future, I will _". Look your partner in the eye when you tell them this.	<b>Apology technique</b> <i>borrowing ideas from how to make a good apology for an interpersonal take on concrete, meaningful expression of commitment to future attitude change</i>
10. Verbally reaffirm your commitment to each other and to your agreement.	<b>Intent to cooperate</b> (from interpersonal persuasion lit) Regarding interpersonal persuasion, Lindsfold et al.'s work finds that in situations where individuals are benefitted by cooperation, a statement of intent to cooperate should be rephrased and repeated in order to be made more convincing. In their study, when one individual made such statements multiple times in different ways, they were effective in convincing the other party to cooperate. This outcome occurred even when the audience was hostile, meaning the other individual was not initially inclined to cooperate (1986). <i>Functions as statement of intent to cooperate.</i>



Table 2: Theoretical Justification for 6 Feminist Don'ts List

Don't	Justification
<p>1. Don't use words that systematically disadvantage women (bitch) or language that devalues the feminist movement (angry feminist, feminazi). Ever. Even as a joke. Even when there are no women present to hear you.</p>	<p><b>Mutual negative face support strategy</b> (for dealing with identity freezing, in IMT)          "Avoiding interaction that causes the dialectic tension" - Gudykunst, p. 201-202  <i>Recommendation is to avoid words which actively stereotype, which would cause the other to feel identity-frozen</i></p> <p><b>Mutual positive face support strategy</b> (for dealing with Self-Other face dialectic, in IMT)          "Supporting both one's own and the partner's identities in alternate areas or alternate occasions" - Gudykunst, p. 202  <i>Direction to avoid stereotype words even when a woman is not around is trying to encourage partner support in alternate settings, including those where the partner is not present</i></p>
<p>2. Don't make value judgements of others based on their gendered body</p>	<p><b>Avoid identity freezing</b>          "people in early phases of intercultural relationships lack detailed knowledge about each other [and] since cultural memberships constitute the first type of information people obtain about each other...they tend to see each other only as members of their respective cultures and to ignore other aspects of each other's identity" - Gudykunst, 199</p> <p><b>Mindfulness</b> (from Face Negotiation Theory)          "Mindfulness—one must choose to seek multiple perspectives on the same event." -Ting-Toomey  <i>In order to avoid identity freezing by assuming that someone is a certain way because of their gendered body and communicate competently in an intercultural setting, one must be mindful of multiple perspectives and not make judgements about other people based on external characteristics</i></p>
<p>3. Don't give up after one bad interaction – if you are misjudged by one individual, do not conflate this with misjudgment by the entire feminist movement.</p>	<p><b>Avoid identity freezing</b>          "people in early phases of intercultural relationships lack detailed knowledge about each other [and] since cultural memberships constitute the first type of information people obtain about each other...they tend to see each other only as members of their respective cultures and to ignore other aspects of each other's identity" - Gudykunst, 199</p> <p><i>Identity freezing occurs when an individual has one bad interaction with a feminist and then assumes all feminists are bad - this step hopes to prevent that immediate freeze by encouraging individuals to "not give up" and be open to learning about individuals rather than judging all feminist-aware individuals as one</i></p>

<p>4. Don't get defensive – to avoid this, pay attention to places where you may feel attacked or topics where you are insecure and formulate logical, non-defensive responses to these specific points. This way, you are prepared rather than caught off guard.</p>	<p><b>Persuasive Speaking best practice</b> Tracy references the importance of anticipating the response of your audience and knowing where they might 'attack' or disagree with you (2005). In public speaking this might be used to form a rebuttal section of an argument, but this idea can be translated for interpersonal interactions and suggests that pre-planning responses to anticipated points of disagreement may help to be more convincing and avoid becoming flustered or defensive.</p>
<p>5. Don't assume that societal privilege is earned, deserved, or an automatic invitation to help those less privileged.</p>	<p><b>Whiteness Theory</b> (as applied to service learning) In Endres &amp; Gould's 2009 study of Whiteness and white students in service learning projects, it was found that students tended to acknowledge their white privilege while still buying into the system of Whiteness. This led them to see themselves as 'helping' or 'teaching' immigrant families, rather than working with and learning from them, and to assume that their Whiteness was an asset rather than a privilege to be navigated. This study's findings can be translated to the case of feminist aware/feminist unaware individuals interacting because allies should be careful not to conflate privilege with the automatic need to 'help' and rather understand that as feminists their goal is to break down the system which affords them this privilege.</p>
<p>6. Don't use humor too frequently to demonstrate that you are serious about talking about/supporting feminism.</p>	<p><b>Humor/Interpersonal Bonding research</b> A study by Mette et al. finds that the effect of demonstrating a sense of humor depends on the reputation of the communicator. If humor was unexpected, the response was largely positive, but if humor or un-serious behavior was predicted then the use of humor tended to not affect the response (1971). <i>Consistent humor from someone exploring feminism may be read as making fun of the values they are claiming to support and prevent genuine bonds from forming.</i></p>